

PSYC15. Foundations in Community Psychology

Course information

Course name: PSYC15H3: Foundations in Community Psychology.

Prerequisites: PSYB10H3 and [PSYB07H3 or STAB22H3 or STAB23H3] and PSYB70H3.

Class time: In-person Thurs., 1:10 - 3 PM (view ACORN or Quercus for classroom location).

★★ **Important:** This is an **in-person** course. **Weekly attendance is required.** ★★
★★★ Please do not take this course if you cannot commit to attending class each week. ★★★

Teaching team

Course Instructor: Dr. Kosha Bramesfeld (she/her/they)



See Quercus to learn more about your teaching team

Office hours: Wed. 1:30-2:30 & Thurs. 3:15-4:15 PM

Contact me: See "Contact Us" on Quercus for details

Email: kosha.bramesfeld@utoronto.ca

Teaching Assistants (TAs): Please see Quercus for information about the TAs.

*Correspondence with us must occur via the Quercus inbox or your University of Toronto email address. We will not respond to emails coming from email addresses outside of U of T.

Course website, readings, and materials

Readings for the course have been made available via the library reading list (see Quercus for access). Other materials for the course will be posted in the Modules section of our course website on Quercus. The course website should be your first stop for most course questions and inquiries. Please make arrangements to access the course materials on Quercus at least twice per week.

Course description

Community psychology is an area of psychology that examines the social, cultural, and structural influences that promote positive change, health, and empowerment among communities and community members. This course will offer an overview of the foundational components of community psychology including its theories, research methods, and applications to topics such as community mental health, prevention programs, interventions, the community practitioner as social change agent, and applications of community psychology to other settings and situations. To provide students with hands-on opportunities to develop important competencies related to community psychology, students will act as community consultants throughout the term to address a real community problem.

Winter 2024 community consultant group project

This term, PSYC15 students will act as community consultants to help the Department of Psychology better understand and address perceived gaps in our curriculum related to equity, diversity, and inclusion and career and graduate school preparation. To address these issues, you will work individually and in small groups to search the literature, analyze qualitative data, and conduct peer-to-peer interviews and focus groups as part of an effort to put forward specific recommendations for helping the department address these issues. To succeed on this project, students must be prepared to (a) attend class regularly and (b) engage in small group discussions, group activities, and collaborative project work throughout the term.

Learning objectives

Foundational knowledge

- Recognize how community psychologists use basic and applied research to develop evidence-based approaches for addressing a range of social issues across disciplines.
- Describe the various theories and approaches that help community psychologists address social issues, comparing and contrasting the various methods and approaches used.
- Identify the values of Community Psychology and discuss the ethical considerations of community research, intervention, and assessment.

Research, Intervention, and Evaluation

- Demonstrate an ability to identify, critically evaluate, and cite and reference a range of sources, including peer reviewed articles, community resources, and the grey literature.
- Recognize how the scientific method can be applied to document social issues, conduct needs assessments, and implement and evaluate community interventions.
- Practice using quantitative and qualitative research methods and data analysis techniques to better understand community issues and evaluate the effectiveness of potential solutions.

Communication, collaboration, group work, and cultural humility

- Demonstrate oral and written communication skills by writing a cover letter and resume, interviewing group members, giving small group presentations, leading small group discussions, and writing article critiques and an advocacy brief.
- Demonstrate an ability to work in collaboration with classmates and community members to better understand community issues and to co-generate creative solutions.
- Appreciate the importance of developing critical consciousness and cultural humility to respond authentically to the ever-changing complexities of community work, especially in regards to promoting cultural safety and empowerment when interacting with people of diverse backgrounds, abilities, and cultural perspectives.

Course assessments

Marks for the course will be determined based on one in-person midterm test, an in-person final exam, and a series of preparation assignments and in-class assignments assigned each week.

Marks for the course will be distributed as follows:

Assessment category	Points	Percent
Preparation and participation (weekly)	20	20%
Advocacy briefs: individual (due March 12); group (due April 4)	15	15%
Midterm Test (in-class Thursday, February 13 at 1:10 PM)	30	30%
Final exam (to be scheduled during the final exam period, April 9-30)	35	35%
Maximum total points / percent	100	100%

Note: Grades will be assessed based on the [UTSC Grading Scheme](#) for undergraduate courses. Please be aware that in a C-level course (i.e., PSYC15), the bar for “excellent” is set very high. This course requires more independent work and critical evaluation than what might be expected in a typical A-level (e.g., PSYA02) or B-level course (e.g., PSYB10).

Midterm test (30 pts, 30%, in-person, Thurs., Feb. 13 at 1:10 PM)

The midterm test will be an in-person, closed book test scheduled for **Thursday, February 13** during our normally scheduled class time (90 minutes, ~**1:10 PM - 2:40 PM**). The midterm test may include multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions and will cover content from the Unit 1-5 readings, course meetings, and assigned journal articles. Information about the test will be posted at least one week prior to the scheduled midterm. Students who miss the midterm test must follow the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Policy](#) to request a make-up test.

Final exam (35 pts, 35%, to be scheduled during the final exam period)

The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar's office during the final exam period (April 9 - 30). The final exam will be a comprehensive, closed-book, in-person exam covering the readings, class meetings, and journal articles from Units 1-11. Question formats may include multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions. Information about the final exam will be posted at least one week before the final. Please note that [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the [Registrar's Office](#) and should be declared on eService.

Assignments (35 pts, 35%)

Preparation assignments (10 points, weekly). The preparation assignments are due no later than 11:59 PM on Wednesdays. These assignments prepare you for our in-class discussions and activities and help you make progress on the community consultant group project. As such, on-time completion of the assignments is critical for your success in the course. Details about the assignments will be posted on Quercus at least one week prior to each deadline.

In-class activities (10 points, weekly). Class time will be used to introduce information, knowledge, and skills associated with community psychology. We will also use class time for community consultant project meetings and workshops. As such, it is very important that you attend class each week. To incentivize active in-class participation, each week of the course will involve an in-class activity. The first two in-class activities (Jan. 9 & 16) are worth 0.5 points. After that, each in-class activity is worth 1 point. You must be present in class to earn credit.

Individual advocacy brief (10 points, due March 12). To ensure that each student in the group fairly contributes to the community consultant group project, each student in the course will be expected to write their own individual advocacy brief in preparation for working together on the group advocacy brief. Students are expected to carefully follow the guidelines provided. Please see Quercus for details. Students who require an extension on the individual advocacy brief should complete the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#). Valid extension requests will be honored, however, students should be aware that a failure to submit the individual advocacy brief on time could disqualify them from the group project (see below).

Group advocacy brief (5 points, due April 4). Class time will be provided for students to work in small groups to prepare a final group advocacy brief. Project topics and group membership will be finalized mid-way through the term. Participation in the group project requires (a) on-time completion of the preparation assignments, (b) regular attendance to class, and (c) on-time completion of the individual advocacy brief. Students who regularly come to class unprepared, miss important group meetings, do not submit their individual advocacy brief on time, and/or do not adequately contribute to the group project may be removed from their project group. Students who have extenuating circumstances that can explain their lack of participation in the group project can complete the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) to petition to have the weight of the group project transferred to the final exam. Otherwise, students who fail to adequately participate in the group project will receive a "0" on the group advocacy brief.

PSYC15 Missed Term Work Policy, Winter 2025

Accessibility / unique circumstances. Because of the collaborative nature of the course, success in this course requires (a) on-time completion of the preparation assignments, (b) regular class attendance, and (c) on-time completion of the individual advocacy brief. If you are registered to receive accessibility accommodations for this course and/or if circumstances arise that threaten your ability to submit work on time or to attend class, please set up an appointment with me as soon as possible so we can work together to determine a plan for success.

Late preparation assignments / missed in-class activities. Students can complete the [TCPS2-CORE training](#) to earn **three** “flex days” that can be used to submit late assignments and/or to receive accommodation for a missed in-class activity. Each “flex day” can be used to make up for a missed in-class activity **-OR-** to receive a one day extension on a preparation assignment. The “flex days” can be used in any combination desired. If a student has not earned any “flex days” or does not have any “flex days” remaining, they will receive 0 points for each class period missed and 50% off for each preparation assignment submitted up to one week late. (Assignments submitted more than one week late will be assigned a score of 0). Students who have extenuating circumstances can submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) to inquire if some or all of the missed points can be transferred on to the final exam.

Extensions on the individual advocacy brief. Late assignments will be penalized 1 point per day that they are late unless students submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) (*by Tuesday, March 25) and submit the proper documentation for the late work, as outlined on the next page. **Do not wait for our response to resume work on your assignment.** Extensions may be as short as one business day, depending on the nature of the illness/emergency. Complete your assignment as soon as you can, and submit it online via Quercus. **Please note that although valid extension requests will be honoured, students may be excluded from the group project if their individual advocacy briefs are not submitted on-time.**

Extensions on the group advocacy brief. In most cases, extensions / make-up assignments will **not** be granted for the group advocacy brief. If you are excluded from the group project, or your group is not able to complete the group advocacy brief on time, you can submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) to request that the weight be deferred to the final exam.

Missed Midterm Test. If you have a qualifying reason for missing the midterm test, please submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) and the proper documentation for the absence, as outlined on the next page (*by Tues., Feb. 17). The decision will be sent to your U of T email address. It is your responsibility to check your email address to ensure timely receipt of our decision. The make-up test is tentatively scheduled for Wed., Feb. 26 at 5:30 PM.

Request for a second make-up test. If you miss the regularly scheduled test (on Feb. 13) **and** the make-up test (~ Feb. 26), the criterion for rewarding a second make-up test will be **much** stricter. Without formal documentation of a qualifying illness, conflict, or emergency, a second make-up test may not be granted. To request a second make-up test, you must submit a **new** [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) with **updated** documentation that covers the date of the make-up test (*by Mon., March 3). The decision will be sent to your U of T email address. It is your responsibility to check your email address to ensure timely receipt of our decision.

Missed Final Exam: [Missed Final Exams](#) are handled by the Registrar's Office and should be declared on eService.

Supporting documents for missed term work

AccessAbility accommodations. Submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) and select “AccessAbility” as the reason for needing a make-up test or extension. If your request for an assignment extension is within the scope of your AccessAbility accommodations, please upload your accommodation letter as your form of documentation (no other documentation is required). If you must miss the midterm test or your request for an extension falls outside the scope of your accommodation letter, please **contact your AccessAbility consultant** and have them email me at kosha.bramesfeld@utoronto.ca to outline the requested accommodations.

Illness, injury, or emergency. If you require a make-up test or assignment extension due to illness, injury, or some other type of emergency, you must submit one of the following forms of documentation (*typically **within 2 business days of the missed work**):

- **[ACORN](#) Absence Declaration.** Students may use the Absence Declaration tool to self-declare an absence once per term for a maximum of seven consecutive days. The form should be submitted within two days of the missed term work and the date of the missed term work must fall within the seven-day declaration period. Absences cannot be declared in advance, nor can they be declared after the fact.
- **Alternative documentation:** Students who cannot declare on ACORN because they have already used their one declaration for the term, or because they missed the declaration window, will need to submit alternative documentation to me (e.g., a [UofT Verification of Illness Form](#), death certificate, or a self-authored request for compassionate consideration).

Religious observances. If our test conflicts with a religious observance, please submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) (**at least two weeks before the test** or as soon as possible). Select “Religious Accommodation” as the reason. (No other documentation is required).

Academic conflicts. An academic conflict occurs when two or more tests or sanctioned academic events are scheduled at an overlapping time. Having multiple tests or assignments due on the same day is not considered an academic conflict. Students are expected to manage their time effectively to meet assignment deadlines and to plan ahead to study for tests. Because our midterm test is scheduled during our regularly scheduled class time, it is very unlikely that you will have an academic conflict. Indeed, students are responsible for keeping their course timetables conflict-free. Students who register in two courses with overlapping lecture/tutorial/lab schedules will not be accommodated.

With this said, if some kind of academic conflict does occur, please do the following:

1. Submit the [PSYC15 Missed Term Work Form](#) (**at least two weeks before the test** or as soon as the academic conflict is known)
2. Select Academic Conflict as the reason for needing accommodation.
3. Submit evidence of your conflict (e.g., screenshots of the scheduled test or event).
4. Provide the email address of the faculty/supervisor I will need to contact to confirm the conflict and decide how the conflict will be accommodated. **Please note:** The approved accommodation that is agreed upon between me and the other instructor may involve rescheduling your other test/event, rather than rescheduling our PSYC15 test. Please also be aware that the rescheduled test might be rescheduled for the same day as your other test, but at a time that does not result in a direct conflict.

Tentative schedule of topics and readings

Listed below is a tentative schedule of topics, readings, and assignment deadlines. ♦ Preparation assignments are due by **11:59 PM on Wednesdays**, the night before class. * In-class activities occur **during class time** (Thursdays, 1:10-3 PM); **you must be present to participate**. *Students who add the course late will be given up until Jan. 22 to submit their Unit 1 and 2 preparation assignments and in-class activities.

Unit	Topic	Readings	♦ Prep	* In-class
1	Community psychology in context	Course syllabus; Intro to CP & Oppression and Power ; skim History	<input type="checkbox"/> *Jan. 8, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> *Jan. 9, 1:10-3 PM
2	Community collaborations	Who we are ; Competencies ; Collaborations ; Recruitment ; & Resumes	<input type="checkbox"/> *Jan. 15, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> *Jan. 16, 1:10-3 PM
3	Understanding and respecting communities	Key theories ; Diversity ; Empowerment ; & Describing Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 22, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 23, 1:10-3 PM
4	Understanding community issues	Problems ; Theories ; Research ; Qualitative Methods ; * Thematic Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 29, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 30, 1:10-3 PM
5	Identifying and defining community issues	Assigned article (see Quercus) ; Review Units 1-5	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 5, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 6, 1:10-3 PM
★★MIDTERM TEST (Thurs., Feb. 27, in-class at 1:10 PM, covers Units 1-5 readings/classes)★★ Reading Week is Feb. 17-21. There is no class on Thurs., Feb. 20. Enjoy your break!				
7	Overview of the Advocacy Brief Project	Policy Briefs ; Effective Meetings ; & Group Discussions ; Approaches ; Thematic Analysis ; & From data to findings	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 5, by 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 6, 1:10-3 PM
8	Finding, critiquing, and adapting interventions	Interventions ; Best Practices ; & Adaptions ; Individual Advocacy (due by Mar. 12) / revision due by Sunday, March	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 12, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 13, 1:10-3 PM
9	Conducting interviews and facilitating meetings	Conducting Interviews ; Group Facilitation Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 19, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 20, 1:10-3 PM
10	Focus groups and stakeholder feedback	Focus group instructions and schedule (see Quercus for details).	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 26, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Mar. 27, 1:10-3 PM
11	Effectively advocating for change	Policy Briefs ; Dissemination & implementation ; Group Advocacy Brief (due by Apr. 4, 5 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Apr. 2, 11:59 PM	<input type="checkbox"/> Apr. 3, 1:10-3 PM
★★FINAL EXAM (Date and Time To Be Determined, covers Units 1-11 readings/classes)★★ Don't forget to complete the course evaluations!				

Important dates and deadlines

- ☐ ♦ **Preparation assignments** are due Wednesdays by 11:59 PM, the night before class.
- ☐ * **In-class activities** take place during class time on Thursdays from 1:10-3:00 PM.
- ☐ **The Midterm Test** is Thursday, February 13, in-class, starting at 1:10 PM.
- ☐ *Reading Week is February 17-21. There is no class on Thursday, February 20.*
- ☐ **The Individual Advocacy Brief** (10 pts) is due by Wednesday, March 12 at 11:59 PM.
- ☐ *The deadline to drop courses without academic penalty is Monday, March 24.*
- ☐ **The Group Advocacy Brief** (5 pts) is due by Friday, April 4 at 5:00 PM.
- ☐ **The Final Exam** will take place during the Final Exam Period (April 9 - April 30).

Commitment to diversity

It is my intention that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of the classroom, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intention to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity, including, but not limited to diversity related to Indigenous culture, race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, sexuality, neurodiversity, religion, dis/ability, age, parental status, and social class. Your contributions to the course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups¹. Importantly, if you anticipate needing accommodations in this course for any reason (including, but not limited to, disability/health considerations, religious/cultural accommodation, and/or economic, work, or family realities), please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work together to determine the best course of action.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Land

In recognition of the diverse history of this land, and the peoples who live and have lived on it, I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for thousands of years. This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

AccessAbility statement

Students with diverse learning needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the [AccessAbility Services](#) as soon as possible. AccessAbility Services staff (located in Rm SW302, Science Wing) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals, and arrange appropriate accommodations. You can contact AccessAbility Services at 416-287-7560 or email ability@utsc.utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Self-care

This course addresses issues around identity, poverty, violence, prejudice, oppression, and other forms of loss. The topics can be difficult to learn about and discuss. Students are encouraged to engage in self-care throughout the course. Resources are available on our course website on Quercus and through the [UTSC Health and Wellness Centre](#).

¹ This diversity statement uses language borrowed directly from the diversity statement example provided by the University of Iowa College of Education, <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/syllabus/checklist/diversitystatement.html>.

Academic Integrity

The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences.

- Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- On tests and exams, cheating includes using or possessing unauthorized aids, looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test, misrepresenting your identity, or falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University.

Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial. The *Plagiarism Prevention Tutorial* posted on our course website provides information on how to paraphrase, cite, and reference sources using APA-style citations and references. You are expected to know the content of this tutorial and to properly paraphrase and cite your sources in all assignments, papers, and presentations. Know this: if you cite and/or reference a source as part of your submitted work for this course, this is you stating that you have actually found and consulted that source. Be prepared to produce and explain any source that you cite within your course work.

University's Plagiarism Detection Tool. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (including, but not limited to ChatGPT) **is not allowed** on tests / exams and **is strongly discouraged** in the preparation of your engagement activities and assignments for the course. Please note that the use of any writing tool (including but not limited to generative AI) has the potential to violate two key premises of academic integrity that are core to this course:

1. Your written work should reflect your own knowledge, understanding, and critical analysis. **Asking anyone (or any tool) to do your work for you is an academic integrity violation.** Be prepared to explain anything that you submit as your work.
2. If you cite and/or reference a paper in your work for this course, this is you stating that you have actually found and consulted that source. **Be prepared to produce and explain any source that you cite within your work for this course.**

Recording and/or distributing class materials. Recording, photographing, or distributing any aspect of this course, including (but not limited to) assignment prompts, paper guidelines, lectures, guest speakers, or resources – without prior approval of all involved and explicit instructor permission **is not allowed**. This includes (but is not limited to) entering assignment prompts or paper guidelines into generative artificial intelligence tools (such as ChatGPT) or the distribution of course materials through other questionable “studying” services (such as CourseHero).

Useful Resources for Student Success

Our course website will provide a running list of resources specific to the content of the course. In addition, you may find the following resources helpful for your general professional development as a social psychology scholar.

Academic supports²

USTC Student Policies: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/studentaffairs/student-policies>

UTSC Dates and Deadlines: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/registrar/dates-and-deadlines>

Writing Services: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>

English Language Development Centre: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

Presentation Skills: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ctl/presentation-skills>

AccessAbility: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~ability/>

Health and Wellness: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/hwc/>

Skill building, future planning, Academic Advising, Career Centre:
<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/>

Writing Centre

This course requires the submission of two term papers. Among other criterion, your papers will be assessed on their comprehensiveness, organization, and communication of ideas. For this reason, you are strongly encouraged to utilize the services of the UTSC Writing Centre:

<https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/welcome>

The Writing Centre supports student learning at any stage in the writing process, from planning an outline to polishing a final draft. During the term, they offer appointments, drop-in hours, and writing groups. Please plan ahead to utilize these services.

English Language Development Centre

Because of its emphasis on written and oral communication, all students in this course are expected to exhibit a high level of “Academic English”. Developing these skills can be challenging for every student, no matter their language or origin. The English Language Development Centre supports all students in developing better Academic English and critical thinking skills needed in academic and professional communication. Make use of the personalized support offered via academic writing skills development and Communication Café sessions to enhance your ability to do better in the various components of this course. Details and sign-up information can be found at: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

² I extend my thanks to Dr. Michael Souza, who compiled this list of student resources and graciously agreed to let me use them in this syllabus.